

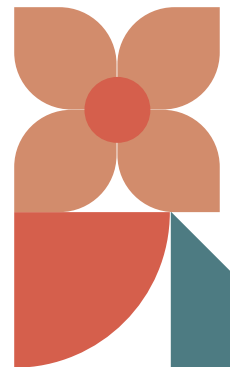
THE COKER RIDGE BENEFICE

The Coker Ridge Benefice comprises seven rural parishes:
West Coker, East Coker, Hardington Mandeville, East Chinnock,
Closworth, Pendomer and Sutton Bingham.



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DIOCESAN STATEMENT

OUR VISION FOR GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

Introduction

We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Rector of the Benefice of Coker Ridge in the Diocese of Bath and Wells might be right for you. In order to help your prayerful discernment, we want to share a bit about our diocesan vision, within which we hope your own ministry might flourish.

Appointing a priest incumbent is amongst the most significant decisions that any benefice makes. When appointments work out well, they contribute significantly to parishes flourishing and growing in a host of different ways – in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities and in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church. Such flourishing is not, of course, all down to the person appointed as priest. It depends first and foremost upon God. It also depends upon everyone in a benefice being willing and able to contribute their unique gifts, skills, resources and abilities: working alongside their priest and sharing in the ministry of the benefice.



Bishop Michael

The flourishing and growth of churches always needs attention, but especially now as we come out of the shock created by the COVID pandemic. The impact of the pandemic created a sharp acceleration in the pattern of decline in church attendance that has been seen in our diocese over many years. Thankfully there are some signs that we are recovering from the COVID decline. For example, data showed that average adult weekly church attendance in our diocese rose between 2021 and 2022. Statistics only ever tell a partial story. It is

continued...

DIOCESAN STATEMENT CONTINUED



even more encouraging to see churches around our diocese developing approaches that respond to the opportunities and challenges in their local context and enable growth to happen.

A vision for growth and transformation

Our diocesan context, described above, has convinced us that for our next season at least, our aim across all our parishes needs to be growing our churches, within and beyond our church buildings, in both numbers and depth of faith, so that we can better work for the transforming of our communities and the life of God's Kingdom amongst us.

Shared priorities

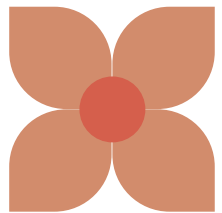
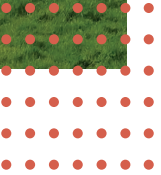
To help us pursue this aim, and following consultation across the diocese in 2023, we are inviting all parishes to focus on four particular areas of our ministry together. It is important for clergy considering working in our diocese to know what these priorities are, even though what they look like in practice will vary in each place.

To value and cherish the people and resources we already have

We aim to ensure each person is well supported and equipped as a follower of Jesus Christ and for any ministries they may feel called to undertake, within the local church and wider community. We are committed to supporting the well-being of all our leaders and church officers, both lay and ordained. We have a fully funded clergy well-being service, the offer of peer support groups, and an excellent team of Diocesan support staff fully focused on supporting our parishes, chaplaincies and schools.

To develop new Christian worshipping communities

Whether it be new forms of worship in a wide variety of settings and times, church revitalisations or church plants, we long to see the good news of Jesus connect with the people in our communities that our traditional offerings struggle to reach.





To share in ministry and leadership

We are committed to the New Testament vision of the church as a vibrant body of people all using their God-given gifts. We are committed to a model of shared local ministry: raising up and equipping lay and ordained leaders able to share together in leading the church and serving God's world.

To deepen and grow faith

This is foundational to all we do. We long to see people of all ages and backgrounds, but perhaps especially children, young people and young adults, having more opportunities to discover, explore and grow in faith.

The outcome we are looking for

When he talks about his own ministry in 1 Corinthians, Paul captures the dynamic we are seeking to achieve. "I planted," he says, "Apollos watered, but God gave the growth"(1 Cor 3: 6). We know that our churches will only flourish and grow as a result of God's action among us – it is God who gives the growth.

But Paul is also clear that we have a part to play too – in watering and planting, in doing the things

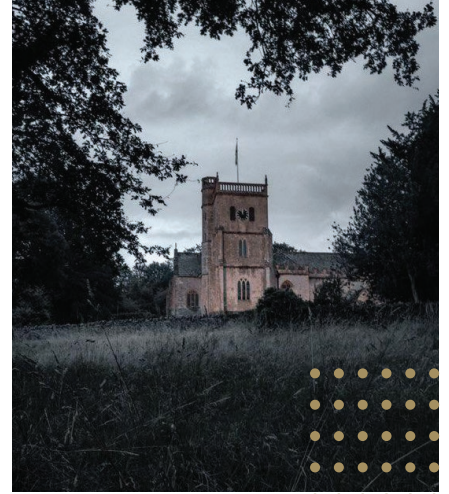
that enable the conditions for God's growth to be supported. So, covered by prayer, our confident hope is that if we are intentional in seeking God's guidance in planning and supporting growth, then God will honour that to see his people flourish and thrive – in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities, in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church and in transforming communities locally and beyond.

Local shaping and diocesan support

There can't be any 'one size fits' all approach to turning the priorities outlined above into action. They always need to be adapted to local circumstances, opportunities and needs. The task of our diocesan support services is to get behind all that local benefices are doing and apart from their general support, there is specific support for exploring how to grow new Christian communities, how to discern and equip a growing range of ministries in your context and how to work well with children and young people. All these areas of support are grounded in exploring what it means to live out our faith.

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DIOCESAN STATEMENT CONTINUED



What implications does this have for the appointment of clergy?

It is important for us all to appoint clergy to benefices who are ready, willing and able to pray for and share in the vision we have for the flourishing and growth of churches and Christian life in our diocese. We want to create an environment that could be described as high challenge, high support. This means appointing clergy who will not only value all that already exists but will be eager to work with others to build on and develop it. It means appointing clergy who are committed to learning, being creative, and to starting with the gifts God has given to them, their benefice and the wider community. We are therefore looking to appoint candidates who will:

- be committed to praying and intentionally seeking the growth and flourishing of the benefices in their care
- relish and expect to work in an environment that is high challenge, high support

- work joyfully and collaboratively with those who share with them locally in ministry and leadership, with their congregations and with others in their locality, to identify ways to grow and develop their churches with the grain of local priorities, resources, skills and passions
- enjoy working in partnership with deanery and diocesan colleagues.

We hope this might be you! We hope that you'd like to join us on the adventure and course we've set for our next ten years. We're praying that God will send us the right labourers for the harvest that God has set before us.

Could this be you?

+ Michael.

Bishop Michael

Charles Sheer

Acting Archdeacon Charlie



WELCOME TO COKER RIDGE BENEFICE

We are a community of Christians working together, growing as disciples, and seeking to fulfil the Diocesan vision of *“Living and telling the story of Jesus”* in our villages. We are delighted that you are considering joining us.

The Coker Ridge Benefice comprises seven rural parishes. In order of Civil Parish population size these are: West Coker, East Coker, Hardington Mandeville, East Chinnock, Clossworth, Pendomer



and Sutton Bingham. The Benefice is situated in South Somerset, close to Yeovil and the Dorset border in beautiful countryside and within easy reach of larger towns and cities.

BENEFICE PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the
Church is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for

the Coker Ridge Benefice, that we may
discern the vocations and ministries
of individuals and parishes so
bringing us together that we may

serve you in holiness and truth,
to the glory of your name; through
our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
AMEN



OUR VISION

COKER RIDGE BENEFICE WAS FORMED IN FEBRUARY 2013, AND IS COORDINATED BY OUR BENEFICE COUNCIL. OVER THE LAST ELEVEN YEARS, WHILST RETAINING THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH PARISH, WE HAVE STEADILY INCREASED THE WAYS IN WHICH WE WORK TOGETHER.

In Matthew 5, (14 & 15) Jesus tells his followers *“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house”*

Jesus’ words are echoed in our Benefice logo – flames of the Holy Spirit over each parish on the hills around Coker Ridge.

A group from across the benefice meet weekly to pray blessings for the people of each parish, including that they will be blessed with “a growing awareness of God’s love for them and His invitation to them.”

Where we are heading

Our desire or vision is to increasingly see signs of the Kingdom of God in our communities, our churches and in the lives of the children and adults living here.

This has been refined through consultation involving PCC members, congregations and gathering opinions from our local communities. When we asked our communities about the role of a village church, responses included support in difficult times, hosting events that bring the community together, and “Christianity in action”.

How we will get there

In practice, pursuing our vision means:

- Mindful of those who cannot, or don’t always want to, engage in a traditional church service, aiming to be church not just on Sundays but also offer people other ways of encountering God. Current examples include Café church in East Chinnock village hall, monthly men’s breakfast, open-air / barn service at Pendomer.

WHAT WE OFFER YOU

WE KNOW THAT CLERGY LIFE CAN BE FAR FROM EASY, AND THAT WE PARISHIONERS ARE OFTEN PART THE PROBLEM! WE'RE THEREFORE COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING YOU IN EVERY WAY WE CAN.

Practically, this includes:

- The involvement and support of three retired PTO clergy in the Benefice.
- Funding for a Benefice Children's and Families Worker, a role which is currently vacant.
- Experienced and enthusiastic Lay Ministry team members and LWAs.
- A skilled volunteer Benefice Administrator.
- A Benefice Treasurer.
- Dedicated Church Wardens .
- An active Benefice Council.

Needless to say, we have no expectation that you will attend every PCC meeting!

Rectory

The home for the Benefice Rector is in West Coker – a large four-bedroom modern house, with enclosed garden, garage and ample off-street parking. The house is adjacent to the church, within a few minutes' walk from the school, pub, Post Office and butchers.



LIFE IN THE BENEFICE

Outreach and Evangelism

Outreach initiatives include Café Church, Men's Breakfast (opposite) and a craft group that meet monthly.

A toddler's group, Acorns (see below for more detail) runs weekly in term-time. Up to 2022, the Benefice employed a Children's and Families worker, for which vacant position the funding remains available.

A number of our churches hold Lent Lunches, Winter Warmer Lunches and Quizzes which bring wonderful fellowship within our communities. One of our parishes also run a street prayer initiative, involving a rotation of streets which are prayed for each month.

Discipleship

There are two discipleship and Bible study groups both of which meet weekly.

The Benefice ran the Archbishop's Difference Course in January 2024.



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LIFE IN THE BENEFICE CONTINUED

Worship

Previous Service Pattern

Date	Time	Parish	Service
1st Sunday	10:00	East Chinnock Church	HC *
	11:00	Sutton Bingham Church	BCP *
	11:00	West Coker Church	MP **
2nd Sunday	09:15	Closworth Church	BCP *
	10:45	East Coker Church	MP **
	10:45	Hardington Church	HC *
	10:45	West Coker Church	FS **
3rd Sunday	09:15	Pendomer Church	HC also via Zoom *
	09:45	East Chinnock Village Hall	Café Church **
	11:00	West Coker Church	HC *
	18:00	East Coker Church	ES **
4th Wednesday	11:00	East Chinnock Home	HC *
4th Sunday	08:00	West Coker Church	BCP *
	09:45	Pendomer Church	FS also via Zoom**
	10:30	Hardington Church	FS **
	11:00	East Coker Church	HC *
	11:00	West Coker Church	MW **
	18:30	Closworth Church	Evensong **
5th Sunday	10:00	Benefice Communion Service	HC *

Key: *Clergy Led Service **Lay Led Service

The combined Benefice Communion Service on fifth Sundays has become a valued opportunity for the church communities to worship together.

Lay Worship Assistants

The Benefice has four Lay Worship Assistants actively involved in services across the Benefice. In addition, other lay ministry teams are involved in planning and leading services such as Café Church in East Chinnock.



Our Benefice Choir



The Choir has been in existence in one shape or another since the Second World War, and our current Choir Master took over the task in 2003.

We currently have about 20 singers from across the Benefice, with a balance of the four voices; soprano, alto, tenor and bass.

Whilst the repertoire is primarily sacred music, we do enjoy singing secular pieces, and are always keen to try something new!

The choir usually contributes at the regular 5th Sunday Benefice Communion service with an anthem, and sing for as many of the festival services, weddings, funerals and other events as we are able.

WORK AMONG CHILDREN

WEST COKER CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

IN WEST COKER THERE IS AN ACTIVE AND VIBRANT, TWO-CLASS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH AROUND 30 PUPILS AGED FOUR TO ELEVEN. THE SCHOOL HAD A MARCH 2023 GOOD OFSTED RATING. THEIR WEBSITE IS WESTCOKER.SOMERSET.SCH.UK

Collective Worship

This takes place everyday and includes singing and celebration, Bible stories and wellbeing. Friday's assembly is a celebration of all that the children have achieved, in or out of school, and is preceded by a coffee morning open to parents, carers and their families.

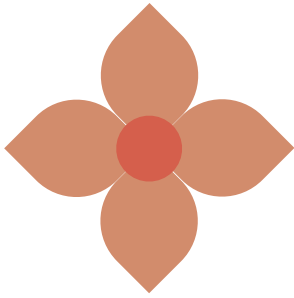
In addition, the pupils attend the church for a monthly 'Combined Worship' involving parents and children, coordinated and led by an experienced lay team. This incorporates festive services such as Harvest, Remembrance, Christingle and Carols.

The school emphasises developing the 'whole child', preparing children to be conscientious, well-equipped citizens of the future, through their roots in the school's Christian Values and ethos of collaboration.



What does the School want from the Rector?

West Coker C of E VC Primary School staff have developed strong links with the lay ministry team. They welcome and look forward to strengthening those relationships, working alongside the lay team and the new Rector. The school would love the new Rector to engage with the school, contribute to the RE curriculum and to be involved in Combined Worship.

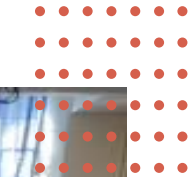


Acorns – Stay and Play

Acorns is a weekly group for babies, toddlers and their carers in West Coker C of E School Hall. The School is pleased to host the group as it offers a warm introduction to the school for potential future pupils. Run by volunteers from the different churches in the Benefice, Acorns' focus is very much on outreach, providing a warm and friendly place for parents to come together, to meet one another, in a welcoming Christian environment (find us on Facebook: West Coker Acorns Stay and Play).

East Coker Primary School

The primary school in East Coker is not a Church of England foundation but there have been links with St Michael's over many years. The school comes to the church for annual harvest and carol services and each year the school leavers are invited to the church for a picnic and to receive a Scripture Union booklet "It's your move", to help them prepare for their transition to senior school.



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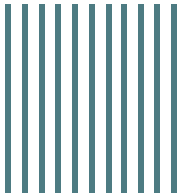
OVERSEAS MISSION

The parishes of St Michael's and St Martin's in East and West Coker are linked with the parish of Twapia in Zambia, part of the diocesan link between Bath and Wells and Zambia. In 2018 Jacqueline Clough, one of our LWAs, participated in a diocesan visit to Zambia.

Through two of the East Chinnock Café Church team the Benefice also has a link to Nepal, where the couple periodically work as 'short termers' with International Nepal Fellowship (INF).



ADMINISTRATION



The Benefice has an Administrator who works on a voluntary basis. A wide variety of tasks are carried out by the postholder, which include being a point of contact across the Benefice/deanery/diocese/funeral directors etc., producing a weekly newsletter, organising and amending the service pattern, ensuring there is a clergy member to take any communion services, funerals, baptisms and marriages. The Administrator also undertakes all invoicing, and other admin tasks as necessary. We also have a Benefice Treasurer who manages the budget held by the Benefice.



FINANCE

Our strengths

Four of our parishes are consistently able to fulfil their parish share contributions (Closworth, East Coker, West Coker and Hardington). Closworth benefits from the income generated by a phone mast located on the church tower.

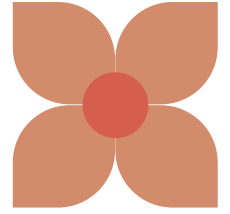
Our challenges

Our other parishes struggle to meet their share and would find doing so through congregational giving alone unachievable. This also means they have negligible resources for investment in mission and ministry. Some parishes are therefore exploring alternative funding sources. Further details available on application.



YEOVIL DEANERY

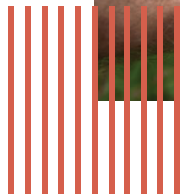
YEOVIL DEANERY COMPRISES FOUR URBAN CHURCHES, SURROUNDED BY 18 SMALL RURAL PARISHES MAINLY IN THREE MULTI-PARISH BENEFICES. THE RECENT DEPLOYMENT PLAN MEANS THAT IN FUTURE THERE WILL BE 7.5 STIPENDIARY PRIESTS ACROSS THE DEANERY.



The 2023 Deanery Mission Plan focuses on:

- Local mission; particularly in new housing areas, establishing new forms of church, and sharing resources across the Deanery to help each other with outreach.
- Shared local ministry; identifying and developing the gifts of lay people, particularly in the areas of worship, pastoral care and schools' engagement, and working across the Deanery to promote and enable this.
- Oversight ministry; seeing stipendiary clergy as oversight ministers, supporting and enabling local church leadership across the Deanery and across all parishes.

The Deanery leadership are looking at ways for the Deanery to work together, sharing resources and training, and providing more mutual support. There is a small but supportive Deanery chapter, which puts a high priority on the pastoral care of local clergy.



INTRODUCTION TO THE BENEFICE AREA

The Benefice landscape is gently undulating rising to 130m at Coker Hill and East Chinnock Hill, the ridge running between these two points giving the Benefice its name. The region is predominantly rural and agricultural, with limited shops and services, but close by are Yeovil, a market and industrial town, and Crewkerne, a Georgian market town.

Yeovil and Crewkerne offer a wide range of shopping and leisure and entertainment facilities, including Yeovil Country Park, theatres hosting shows, films and lectures, including the Yeovil Literary Festival, as well as several National Trust properties nearby. Also, some of our churches (Pendomer, West Coker, East Coker and East Chinnock) hold musical concerts which are open to everyone and offer support with fund raising.

Yeovil is the local centre of employment, the largest being Leonardo Helicopters, the home of British helicopter manufacturing, and Yeovil District Hospital.

West Coker and East Coker have primary schools, feeding secondary schools in Yeovil. For post-16 students, Yeovil College offers a variety of courses



and a University Centre with links to several higher education establishments.

For a wider choice of arts and culture Bath, Bristol and Exeter are easily accessible. For recreation and stunning scenery, the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site is only half an hour away by road.

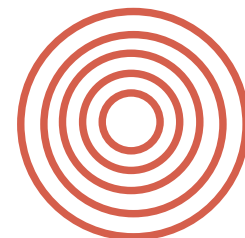
There are good communication links from the Benefice. The A303 and M5 provide links to London and the South West. By train it is only two and half hours to London from Yeovil or Crewkerne. The airports of Bristol, Exeter and Bournemouth are all less than 50 miles away giving access to Europe and farther afield and cross-channel ferries are closer than two hours away.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BENEFICE AREA

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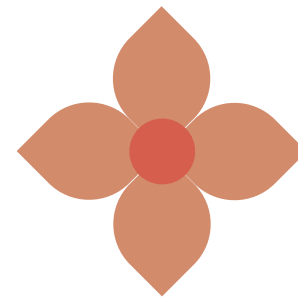
Benefice population

The Benefice is home to just over 5000 people with nearly 40% of the population 60 years of age or older. The 2021 census gives a population of 199 for the combined parishes of Closworth, Pendomer and Sutton Bingham.



Village	Population of Civil Parish (2021)	Church Electoral Roll	Regular attendance	Attendance at Christmas
West Coker	2036	44	20	54
East Coker	1721	58	23	50
Hardington Mandeville	587	24	14	35
East Chinnock	503	19	20	40
Closworth	109 (2018)	5	10	12
Pendomer	46 (2018)	15	15	45
Sutton Bingham	36 (2018)	7	18	15

WEST COKER



Our Village Community

West Coker is a village of around 900 residents in the ecclesiastical parish but around 2000 residents in the civil parish, situated on the A30 just two miles south-west of Yeovil. The village has a C of E Primary School (see above), post office, butchers, general store and garage. There is a busy pub with a second in refurbishment, and the only surviving Victorian twinworks in the country. There is also a hotel and restaurant and a GP surgery. West Coker has a large modern village hall and a new youth and sport pavilion, and offers a wide range of housing. For more details see the village website www.westcoker.net

Church Community

Our building is chilly but our welcome is warm. We are a congregation of generally around 20 retired people. We would love younger people to join us. At St Martin of Tours, we have a service every Sunday morning, except on the fifth Sunday when there is a Benefice service at one of the other churches. There is one Common Worship Holy Communion service and one Book of Common Prayer service in each month. Other services are lay led, and not too formal. To encourage participation by dog owners, we welcome those who bring along their dogs to services. To encourage fellowship, we always offer refreshments after the services.

There are activities with community involvement, such as Lent Lunches and Harvest and Winter Warmer lunches, in the village hall. A popular activity with the wider community has been churchyard tidy up days with tea and cake provided. The church has good acoustics and is ideal for concerts which are a good means of contact with the wider community.

The Lay Ministry Team

We have a Reader-in-training who is half way through his second and final year of formal training, with licensing anticipated in October 2024. Additionally, we have two Lay Worship Assistants who take part and lead services across the Benefice, two very active Churchwardens, a full team of 6 PCC members, treasurer, two Deanery Synod representatives, and a Foundation Governor at the school.



*Sue Bonning and
Mick Collins –
Church Wardens*

Our Church Building



The large building dates back to the 15th century, with a medieval font, Jacobean furniture and Horn window, but was extensively rebuilt by the Victorians. Our last Quinquennial Inspection was in 2020 and we are gradually working through any works that were highlighted.

The people at St Martin's organised and managed a complete roof restoration which involved not only securing a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, but also a loan (now paid off) from our generous neighbours at St Michael's.

We have eight bells in the tower, which are regularly rung at weddings and appropriate festivals and we have regular visits from local visiting ringers.

EAST COKER

Our Village Community

The village of East Coker is a thriving community with a school, café, pub and village hall, as well as a variety of interest groups, which meet regularly. The recreation ground is well used by local sports teams and for occasional village events, such as the picnic to celebrate the late Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the King's Coronation. The associated Pavilion building provides space for the teams and is also used by the Parish Council and the pre-school play group. The village also has an active Scout Group.

The village has a population of 1721, 49% of whom are over 65 years old and 64% describe themselves as Christian. The church is seen as an important feature of the village, even by those who rarely attend the services. The church of St Michael and All Angels is a grade II* listed building and is of historical interest. It attracts visitors from around the world due to its connection to T S Eliot, whose ashes are buried in the church.

Church Community

We are a friendly and welcoming community who worship at St Michael's on a regular basis. In recent months we have been joined by a number of people new to the village. Worship is traditional in style, using forms of service from Common Worship enhanced by organ music and congregational singing. At special events and Benefice services, the singing is uplifted by the Benefice Choir. Each month St Michael's has a service of Holy Communion and lay led services of Morning Prayer and Evensong. Our Lay Worship Assistant is central to the worship, assisted by a willing team who read lessons, lead intercessions and act as sides persons.

St Michael's has an active PCC with a Churchwarden and full complement of officers.



Toffer
Beattie -
Church
Warden

The church offers a focus for fellowship and support within the village. It offers a quiet, peaceful space for meditation and reflection with a feeling of spirituality and faith passed down through the ages. There are usually several weddings and baptisms celebrated at St Michael's each year and many of the local community are remembered in the church with services of thanksgiving for their lives.

Ecumenical Life



The East Coker Christian Fellowship holds a weekly service in the village hall, which is lively and well attended and brings people from a wide area into the village. Members of St Michael's and the Christian Fellowship are welcome at one another's services.

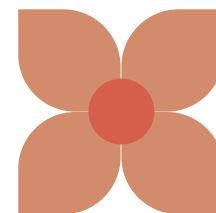
School Links

See details of East Coker and West Coker Primary Schools in the 'Young People' section.

Project Beacon

Project Beacon is a wide-ranging, reordering plan to enable greater use of the building and encourage links with the village. The plans seek to preserve that which is loved and cherished in St Michael's, but sensitively open up its precious space by removing some pews and creating an area able to be used for social and cultural activities. The inclusion of a servery will allow the easier provision of refreshments. This is a forward-looking initiative, but one that takes due regard to centuries of faithful worship that has taken place within St Michael's walls and the precious heritage with which we have been entrusted.

HARDINGTON MANDEVILLE



Our Village Community

Hardington is a beautiful, very friendly and caring village of around 580 people. It comprises three communities: Hardington Moor, Hardington Mandeville and Hardington Marsh. There are lots of activities – the Garden Club, The Players, The Niblicks and the Cricket Club (shared with West Coker) to name but a few – and it has a Village Hall which is always busy with one thing or another. Hardington is fortunate in having three essentials for an active and lively community – the church, the shop and post office and the pub, all of which provide focal points for meeting and engaging with others in the village.

The village holds an annual ‘Party in the Park’, and a ‘Street Fayre’ raising funds for the church and the Village Hall. Church members always play an active part in both these events.

From a recent survey, it is clear that villagers value the shop, the pub and the church and are concerned that they remain open. Beyond that, there is real concern that many village activities are run by elderly people. Our aim is to encourage wider involvement of the younger generation.

Church Community

St Mary's is widely seen as a key part of the community, playing an active and leading role in the village, including addressing its concerns and challenges, for example: the church is recognised as being active in caring for those who are ill or in need of support. In addition, we support national activities such as Christian Aid. We have recently celebrated the 900th anniversary of the present

building (though an earlier church existed from the time of King Alfred). It has a dedicated group of regular worshippers, with a much larger number attending on festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, or on Remembrance Sunday. The regular congregation enjoys the inclusion of former members of other denominations, all of whom regard St Mary's as their village spiritual home.

Our hopes for the future

We are keen to see families and younger people within the church family again.



Daphne Creed and Richard Middleton – Church Wardens

EAST CHINNOCK



Our Village Community

We are a rural community beside the A30 between Yeovil and Crewkerne. We have a population of 503 according to the 2021 census. Over half the population is in the 18-64 age group, and 29% are over 65. Overall, 57% describe themselves as Christian and 42% as of 'no religion'.

Church Community

We are a diverse group of about 30 people. For some, St Mary's has been their church family for many years, through the joys and pains of life. Others have moved into the village and joined more recently. Over the last two years we have been thrilled to see informal Café Church in the Village Hall flourishing with 20+ regulars aged from 3 to 90.

Since regaining use of the 120-year-old Parish Room 18 months ago, responding to a village survey by St Mary's, the renamed "room@thepark" regularly hosts a range of activities, all part of our vision to bring 'church' into the heart of the village.

Worship

Currently we have three services each month (see Service Pattern illustration above) Our vision is to add a fourth service of a different format, potentially in the room@thepark.

Lay Worship, Ministry and Outreach Team



*John Chappelle -
Church Warden*

Alongside the PCC, other lay teams include a Café Church team of eight, a Men's Breakfast team of four, and a team of seven for a Saturday outreach Café in the room@thepark.

Every week lay ministry team members meet to pray blessings for different streets of the village. Twice a year every home receives a card from



St Mary's letting them know we're praying for them and their neighbours. In 2023, six of the congregation, including four PCC members enjoyed attending 'New Wine' together.

Peace and Reconciliation

During WW2, the village became 'home' to a German PoW. Following his return to Germany, he joined his family's stained-glass business. Over the years up to the 1980s, out of gratitude to the village and as a symbol of reconciliation, he commissioned the designs, made and then installed the stunning windows throughout the whole church.

Drawing on that history, we ran a peacebuilding and reconciliation one-day event in 2023 with 40 participants, and speakers from the Community of the Cross of Nails in Coventry and from the Northern Ireland peacebuilding process. Our vision is to grow this peacebuilding and reconciliation ministry, hence running the Archbishop's 'Difference' course in January this year, and aiming to hold further 'Peace Talks' events.

Building for the future

An application submitted in 2022 has been approved in principle for the installation of a toilet and servery in the church building. Funding raised by Friends of St Mary's has been fruitful and the final cost of £30-40K is within reach.

Additionally, plans are being explored for the creation of additional church yard space and provision for parking.

CLOSWORTH



Our Village Community

Closworth is the southernmost parish in the Diocese, bordering Salisbury Diocese and Dorset County. All Saints' church's fine Perpendicular period tower marks the traveller's arrival both in Somerset, famous for such towers, and the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

The building, the faith and ambition of those who built it over the centuries, nurtures our faith today, which is synonymous with our dedication to maintaining the building's fabric and continuing the worship here, as successors to all those who have gone before.

Recent projects have included the restoration of the church bells and installation of a pipe organ, the first it seems in the church's long history. We have a mobile phone mast on the tower, making discreet use of an existing structure, enabling us to raise revenue for maintenance of the building.

Church Community

We have an average attendance of 10 from 47 houses. We use the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Bible, welcome to visitors who seek the re-assurance of time-honoured worship.

Parochial Church Council Members

We see our role as keeping the fabric of the church intact and its use alive, and to be there for others, active Christian or no, in times of need, be it for consolation-with pastoral help- celebration or grief. As well as the recent projects already mentioned on page 14, we have also:

- Mapped and catalogued the graves, of help to those seeking their ancestors. We have added the name of

a parishioner to our war memorial, the first victim of the Falklands War;

- Mapped the parish, numbering each house and listing their occupants, enabling personally addressed delivery of circulars such as a Christmas card, with service details and invitation to come to them.



*Robin Bryer –
Churchwarden
and Secretary*



*Timothy Glover
– PCC Member
and looking after the
fabric of the church*



*James Owen –
Churchwarden
and Treasurer*

PENDOMER



Our Village and Church Community

The parish church is dedicated to Saint Roch and is located close to the Manor House in Pendomer village near Yeovil in Somerset (Postcode BA22 9PH). The ecclesiastical parish of Pendomer falls within the civil parish of Closworth which also embraces Sutton Bingham. There are 19 dwelling houses in Pendomer with a population of about 30 adults and 11 children. In 2022 there were 15 people on the Church Electoral Roll, four of whom resided outside the parish.

A significant proportion of our regular services are lay led, and the Zoom facility set up during Covid continues to be appreciated by those choosing to join worship online. We hold an annual open-air service which is very well attended, attracting people from across the Benefice. After worship, we enjoy getting together over coffee and cake.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC)

As far as possible, our full complement of PCC officers and Church Wardens represents all parts of the small community to which we belong.

In addition to meeting immediately after the APCM, the PCC routinely meets twice a year. Additional meetings are convened when required to consider fabric or other particular matters.

Our Church building

The church building dates from the 14th century or possibly as early 1297, was modified in the 15th century, and is a Grade II* listed building. The interior includes a memorial dating from 1328 and an effigy of a knight believed to be John de Domer. There are remains of 15th century stained glass in some of the windows.

With a particularly good acoustic, it has been our pleasure for the last several years to host professional concerts in the building, managed by 'Concerts in the West', with full houses each time.

To facilitate donations, we were pleased to install in the building an electronic payment device which we bought via the Diocese.



Church Wardens Robin and Sheila Carpenter alongside their fellow PCC members.

SUTTON BINGHAM



Our Village Community

Sutton Bingham is a small community about three miles to the south of Yeovil with eight properties including the Manor, church and Sailing club and a population of about 25.

All Saints' is a 12th Century Norman church, designated a Grade 1 listed building, situated close to the shores of Sutton Bingham Reservoir. The interior has a series of fine wall paints from the 1300s which draw worldwide visitors.



Church Community

The church has a congregation of around 18 for a regular BCP service with Communion held on the first Sunday of each month. We also hold a Harvest Festival and Carol Service which are well attended by members of the small number of households in the village and friends of the congregation. The church has also celebrated a wedding this year.

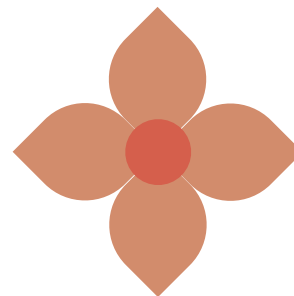
The congregation is very friendly and welcoming, made up mostly of older people who have always attended All Saints', but we have also been blessed by some who have joined recently.

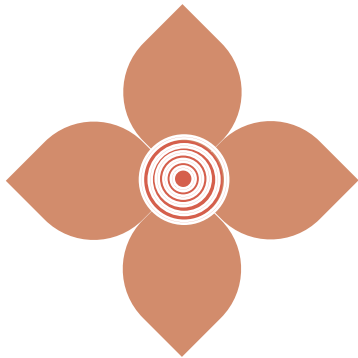
Our hopes for the future

The church has parking close by, and level access with only two small steps, providing very accessible services for those with mobility difficulties.



Elaine Taylor – Acting Church Warden





The Coker Ridge Benefice
Charlie Peer
Acting Archdeacon Wells
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Design: nickcheesman.com

